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ABSTRACT

Based on a week-long stay in Israel, this report examines regional colleges and other non-university, post-compulsory institutions in the Negev, as well as a community college and two American external-degree institutions in Jerusalem. After introducing the visit's purpose and activities, the report outlines the development of Israeli regional colleges, which were established to increase general access to post-compulsory education and higher education opportunities for qualified students and to provide trade and technical education to meet manpower needs. Next, summaries are provided of site visits to three regional colleges. Pinchas Sapir College is described in terms of its service area, the arrangement whereby students can take academic courses at Ben Gurion University (BGU), and the positive and negative features of the college's programs. The section on Ramat Hanegev College highlights its location in an underdeveloped region, emphasis on the arts and environmental studies in Jewish life, limited cooperative arrangements with BGU, and overseas program. The Practical Engineering College of Beer-Sheva is examined in terms of its transfer relationship with BGU, articulation with high schools, and facilities and faculty. Next, BGU's teacher-supervisor education program and its program to prepare "opportunity" students for college-level work are explained. Finally, brief summaries are provided of the programs of Hadassah Community College and Empire State Community College's and Rockland Community College's overseas programs. (DAB)

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A REPORT OF A VISIT TO ISRAEL

(Sponsored by a Joint UCLA/Ben Gurion University Committee)
December 13-17, 1982

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the trip was to study regional colleges and other post-compulsory institutions of non-university character in the Negev, and to identify relationships, i.e., articulation (services to transferring students) and transfer (exchange of courses/credits in advanced standing) preparatory programs, special admissions procedures, external degrees/credits, and other practices and activities that may exist between universities and non-universities. While particular attention was given to Ben Gurion University of the Negev and the several surrounding non-universities, a quick view was fortuitously made of one additional institution in Jerusalem and an office supporting short-cycle programs offered externally by two American institutions home-based in New York State.

The week-long schedule consisted of two lecture/discussions: one with the Department of Education faculty and other guests ("Linkages within National Education Systems: A Necessity for the Future") and one with a graduate class ("Short-Cycle Higher Education: A Dynamic International Development") conversations with several members of the University faculty and staff, and visits to two community colleges and one technical college. Several other activities of a social nature considerably enhanced the experience: including a Hanukka party, a trip to the Bedouin market, and several luncheons. Participation in a lecture/discussion presented by Professor David Cohen (Harvard University) was of additional professional and personal benefit.

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The host professors and their staffs responded with utmost courtesy, cordiality, and accommodation. Every request was handled efficiently and with warmth. The spirit of friendship and support extended us during the brief stay contributed immeasurably to the experience.

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAELI REGIONAL COLLEGES

The following chronicle outlines the development of regional colleges in Israel - a movement found in 30 to 40 nations of the world designed to provide short-cycle programs for a wider range of population than traditionally served by universities. Material was gleaned from papers prepared by students in two UCLA graduate seminars, one in particular offered by Professor Burton Clark and another by the author, and from several brief articles found in American journals. It is unfortunate that so little material appears to be available on the Israeli non-university movement. Other than a scattering of descriptive pieces in popular journals, e.g., THE COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE JOURNAL and references in a few books on Israeli education, virtually nothing exists. The potential of these institutions to the Israeli society needs to be appraised and current credits and debits carefully documented. Several Ben Gurion professors are considering these directions for their own research, as well as collaborative efforts with me.

A plan to establish regional colleges similar to American two-year colleges was initially announced in 1966 by the Minister of Education and Culture. The announced criteria were characteristics of the movement wherever found: (1) to increase general access to post-compulsory education, (2) to improve higher education opportunities of qualified compulsory school graduates, and (3) to provide trade and technical studies on a diversified basis to meet manpower needs. Protection of selectivity policies of universities was

also stipulated (Kleinberger, 1969). Again, similar to the movement elsewhere, the colleges were not quickly formed and were slow to develop. The first attempts opened in the late 1960s were operated by kibbutzim. Short-cycle courses were mostly offered by university faculty members. The institutions rapidly became in effect university extension centers, and characteristically, had second rate reputations (Gamson and Horowitz, 1971).

In 1974, four regional colleges enrolled some 6500 students, most of whom (about 5500) were in trade and technical programs. Each was affiliated with a university: Menaseh with Tel Aviv, Ohel Sarah with Haifa, Teemach with Bar-Ilan, and Tel Hai with Tel Aviv and Hebrew University. As reported in one of the UCLA student papers, legitimacy soon became (and continues to be) the most critical problem. Academic programs decreased, due in part to staff deficiencies and transportation and scheduling difficulties of those available, and non-degree short courses became standard offerings. The Israeli regional colleges inevitably became third-tier institutions in programming, and in reputation behind the universities and the technical colleges established in several larger centers, including Beer-Sheva, to serve the higher (non-degree) technologies.

The regional college system, if it may be called that, now has at least eight institutions: the four originals that presumably still operate, plus three more recent schools within the Ben Gurion University service area: The Pinchas Rapir College (Shaar Hanegev Educational Campus) at Ashkelon, Ramat Hanegev College at Yeroham, and a community college at Elat. The eighth is Hadassah Community College in Jerusalem that offers two-year courses for technicians and practical engineers, as well as certain paramedical courses in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Hebrew University.

SUMMARIES OF REGIONAL COLLEGE VISITS

While the offerings and services provided by the two Negev area community colleges visited are quite extensive, only those pertaining to articulation and transfer will be discussed in any detail. Suffice it to say, a wide variety of courses and services related to local conditions and educational needs require most of the institutions' energies.

Pinchas Sapir College

The Pinchas Sapir College of the Negev serves 13 regional and local councils and promotes education and development for residents of 60 kibbutzim, 100 moshavim, and 10 cities and development towns. Academic courses sponsored by Ben Gurion University are examples of articulation and transfer relationships. As the director, Moshe Shelhav indicated, local students can accumulate 4-20 credits per week of university-endorsed degree work, and in fact can complete the equivalent of the initial first two university years in three college years. According to the University coordinator, the University currently sponsors 19 programs enrolling 312 students. The offerings include classes in anthropology, economics, Jewish literature, mathematics, psychology, and statistics. As many as 100 may be officially enrolled in courses on the University campus.

While this program appears to be extremely noteworthy and positive, several negative features were noted: (1) the lack of library opportunities for the local students, (2) course scheduling limited to one meeting per week because of local work/travel requirements, and (3) more flexible admission requirements on the local vis a vis the University campus courses tend to weaken the success potential of students who later transfer into regular degree programs. These frailties characterize transfer "off campus" programs wherever they exist. In this situation, however, both parties readily admit

the difficulties and are working on individual solutions.

A further impression is offered. University representatives, including the field coordinators and department and division administrators show a cordial and flexible attitude with respect to these programs. All concerned appear to recognize the regional colleges' need for individuality and independence from University domination. Leaders of the colleges clearly indicated that university-sponsored programs were, in reality, minor considerations, and on several occasions suggested that they appreciated being allowed to manage their own affairs. By continuing the cooperative programs, both groups are providing important services to isolated communities, and to the society.

Other degree courses are offered in conjunction with the Hebrew University in Rehovot (studies toward the M.A. in Agriculture) and with the Open University called Everyman's University with offices in Tel Aviv (B.A. Program for Community Leaders).

A new series of courses for foreign students was started last fall: "Kibbutz in the Negev." During the initial six-month experience, the students live in a kibbutz in a nearby development town, and take Ben Gurion University baccalaureate classes at the college. Up to 300 study hours will be allowed toward a degree, and in another feature, special programs are developed in collaboration with the student's home institution.

Although Everyman's University and other external degree institutions operating in Israel increase the competition for qualified students, such programs expand the services to local citizens who otherwise would probably be denied opportunities.

Ramat Hanegev College

Ramat Hanegev College is identified as the only college in the world that emphasizes the arts and environmental studies in Jewish life. This is the

primary institutional objective receiving the complete attention of the President, Menahem Alexenberg, and the Director of the Institute for the Arts, Moshe Davidowitz. Material in the rather impressive brochure describes that major effort to create an environment "where rabbis and artists study Torah together in an effort to derive exciting new art forms from the deep structure of the Jewish consciousness" (Ramat Hanegev College, Yeroham, p. 2). An ambitious building construction program is now underway primarily to further the primary purpose. Units will include quarters for the Institute for the Arts, Research Center for Judaism, Synagogue, Library/Media Center, and Institute for Future Studies that will house the newly formed Chapter of the World Future Society, a particular concern of the Institute Director. Some support is provided by the Jewish community of Montreal, Canada, now the parent city of Yeroham.

Both of the college leaders recently immigrated to Israel from New York City, leaving responsible university positions to create this unusual institution in an extremely underdeveloped section of the country. In addition to economic and ecological difficulties, the development town faces unique population problems: 60 percent of the inhabitants are under 12 years. Community leaders are therefore the younger parents. A large number of the 6 to 7000 dwellings are equipped with multimedia/video units. College leaders are trying to respond to this service opportunity.

The cooperative class arrangement with Ben Gurion University is understandably a minor priority. While the leadership is appreciative of the need to serve the academically gifted, their primary interest is directed toward the world culture ideal. Fortunately, University officials recognize this. They, in turn, are very willing for the time being to let the group continue toward the self-determined goal. When, in that regard, credability is once estab-

lished, a firmer working relationship could be negotiated.

The college has a rather ambitious overseas program - a cooperative exchange with American universities, i.e., University of California at Berkeley, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York University, where as many as 18 credits taken in Yeroham may apply toward University degrees. Here, again, is an example of pressure that is especially annoying to the leadership of the more traditional university.

A new campus of the College is planned for Dimona, a city of 32,000 to the north, where cooperative baccalaureate courses will be developed with Everyman's University. Administrative offices will remain at Yeroham.

The Practical Engineering College of Beer-Sheva

The Beer-Sheva Engineering College is one of four comparatively large Israeli technical colleges. Like second-tier institutions in nations of the world, this one specializes in two-year courses in practical applied technologies. Degrees are offered through the National Council for Higher Education. A transfer relationship exists with Ben Gurion University. Students with grades averaging 85 points (out of 100) or above can earn 35 to 42 units toward University Engineering degrees, or approximately the full first year. In Haifa, the director mentioned, this transfer agreement is published in the college catalog.

Similar transfer arrangements have been negotiated with community colleges. Some students with high averages are accepted in the second year at the Engineering College. A few promising high school students continue for a 13th year at high school, and then finish the two-year program, e.g., electronics, at the College.

Why are the same courses given at the high school and college? A portion of the answer is related to required army service that ordinarily comes imme-

diately after high school. It is then more convenient for both students and institutions to allow completion of technical courses before entering military duty.

On the question of liberal arts courses within technical degree programs, the director replied that industry wants skilled graduates and that about 80 percent of the students express satisfaction with training as related to successful employment experiences. Again is raised the sharp dichotomy between liberal and technical education. These concepts are often seen as mutually exclusive concepts, and practitioners on each side easily become antogonists.

The college operates a wide variety of programs at seven extension centers. The total student body consists of 1200 practical engineers and technicians, 400 vocational trainees, 600 in retraining, and about 1500 in upgrading centers, including the army, jails, and in industry. According to their birth places, 43 percent of the students are Israelis, 25 percent Asian-African, and 32 percent European-American - indeed a cosmopolitan group (Practical Engineering College of Beer-Sheva, Student Population, Table 2).

One linkage is difficult to close. According to Ministry of Education policy, preparatory courses given by the University and the College are not considered equal. "Make up" courses taken at the College are good only for continuing at that institution, and cannot be applied toward University entrance. College matriculation decisions are made by the Ministry. In contrast, the University makes its own decisions on the matriculation examination results. The Ministry can overrule College decisions but not those of the University.

College officials are very proud of their enterprise, particularly the apparent flexibility and relevancy of courses and scheduling. The doctorate is not required for faculty employment or promotion. The latter is based

primarily on what was termed "institutional research." This comment was followed by a seemingly contradictory statement. Little credit toward promotion is given for "practical research." College leaders indirectly showed interest in achieving University status while continuing to support applied programs. The above comment is suggestive of that ambition.

COMMENTS ON OTHER CONVERSATIONS

The conversation with Mrs. Shahav, Director of Teacher Training, was primarily on the University's high school teacher-supervisor education program, specifically, about courses for supervisors who come one day per week to the University campus for a total of 200 hours per year. The complete course is 400 hours. A supervisor-teacher selected by the principal earns a certificate in a specific field by producing a course syllabus that must include "new" techniques for various types of students.

Israeli compulsory schooling consists of a six-year elementary school and a six-year junior high/senior high comprehensive school system. English is started in the fifth year and is required in high school as well as the University. Arabic and French are required in high school, along with English. Some elementary schools offer Arabic.

Dr. Redlich, a senior member of the History faculty responsible for the pre-academic courses sponsored by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, described at length the intriguing "second chance" opportunity program. Begun in 1977, the entering group is currently about 70; 40 to 50 will graduate and around 30 are likely to be accepted for regular University degree courses. The "opportunity" students, many of them military veterans, are selected through a nationwide psychometric examination. Each faculty sets its own qualifying cutoff. The eight-month routine normally consists of high

school mathematics, English as a foreign language, Hebrew, and History, Anthropology, or Political Science. How to study at the University and the use of library facilities are important segments. Students come to the campus four days per week for afternoon and evening classes. The tuition charge is higher than for regular classes; however, many are on subsidy.

Those successfully completing the program do not have to face University matriculation examinations. The director was justifiably proud of this unusual activity, and personally greeted several graduates as we walked across the campus. There is apparently strong public pressure to increase the "second chance" program and to expand it to other faculties, only a few of which are now so-engaged.

VISITS IN JERUSALEM

While in Jerusalem, brief conversations were exchanged with the information officer of The Hadassah Community College and at the headquarters of two American external degree institutions: Empire State College (Saratoga Springs, New York) and Rockland Community College (Suffern, New York).

The Hadassah Community College is partially supported by the Women's Zionist Organization of America. The curriculum is entirely confined to the technologies. Computer Studies, Technical Photography, Electronics, and Medical Secretary courses are most prominent. Many of the two-year programs are offered in conjunction with various governmental departments, and a degree of "practical engineer" is awarded by the Government Institute for Technological Training. Cooperative transfer arrangements with universities do not appear to exist. In fact, the official spoke rather disparagingly on the subject of transfer agreements.

Both external degree institutions offer opportunities for local students to earn credits toward their certificates or degrees through work-study

arrangements or scheduled classes. As characteristic of these two colleges, considerable flexibility and leeway are given to credit-earning. In practice, Empire State College is widely recognized for its external programming which includes extensive use of one-to-one tutorials and advanced credit for prior experiences, known as "experiential learning." Rockland Community College has perhaps more overseas programs than any of the American community colleges, and is solidly in the business of providing educational opportunities for its own students overseas and local populations. Both institutions are recognized through our accreditation system. Although not as yet appearing to be formidable in Israel, these colleges could eventually become seriously competitive with the established Israeli colleges and universities. Continuing communication between the systems and institutions is advisable.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

As a final comment, attention is drawn to the recently released book: Educational Administration Policy Making: The Case of Israel, by Dr. Ephraim Ben-Baruch and Dr. Yoram Neumann. This compilation of conceptual articles and empirical studies dealing with the Israeli system of higher education is the first in a series of books for which Dr. Ben-Baruch will be responsible. Several more are tentatively envisioned over the next three years, with one each year to be devoted to studies on Israeli higher education. Plans for other collaborative research ventures are under way with members of the UCLA School of Education faculty.

The current publication is of high quality. The several conceptual pieces develop original treatments of fundamental theories in administration/management, and the empirical studies have sound methodological bases. This book signals the growing importance of Ben Gurion University on the international scene, particularly the Faculty of Education.

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